



## What's Left of Me

*Kat Zhang*

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*I should not exist. But I do.*

Eva and Addie started out the same way as everyone else—two souls woven together in one body, taking turns controlling their movements as they learned how to walk, how to sing, how to dance. But as they grew, so did the worried whispers. Why aren't they settling? Why isn't one of them fading? The doctors ran tests, the neighbors shied away, and their parents begged for more time. Finally Addie was pronounced healthy and Eva was declared gone. Except, she wasn't . . .

For the past three years, Eva has clung to the remnants of her life. Only Addie knows she's still there, trapped inside their body. Then one day, they discover there may be a way for Eva to move again. The risks are unimaginable—hybrids are considered a threat to society, so if they are caught, Addie and Eva will be locked away with the others. And yet . . . for a chance to smile, to twirl, to speak, Eva will do anything.

## What's Left of Me Details

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Author : Kat Zhang

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## From Reader Review What's Left of Me for online ebook

### Mitch says

I don't get it. I mean, yeah, I understand the premise, the plot, the characters, the problems, the basic story behind *What's Left of Me*, but even after the last page, I'm struggling to figure out what the point of this book is - and I really don't see one. Pity, because otherwise there's a lot of positive things I can say about the story, highly original, thought provoking, well written, but what it comes down to is I sort of feel the entire thing was rather ... pointless ... so I really can't say I liked it.

I guess that's the downside to all the originality. Thoughts provoked, but they didn't really go anywhere. Yeah, the concept of hybrids, people having two souls in one body, is fairly unique, even in today's glut of dystopians, and Addie and Eva have some pretty tough choices to make over the course of the story. But when I'm reading a book, I'm really interested in the why, particularly with a setup as unique as this one, and it's here that I'm sorely disappointed. Why have hybrids? Why persecute them? Why is Addie and Eva's world the way it is? And after going through the entire book trying to figure out the point to this unique premise, the only thing I got out of it is, thanks to some sort of government conspiracy, hybrids are bad. Must be eliminated. Oh ... and (view spoiler). Normally with dystopians, I can sort of figure out some of the backstory, why the author set up her world the way it is, and think of some possible reveals in the sequel, but *Hybrid Chronicles*, I got nothing. For a genre all about government coverups, questioning authority, and uncovering the truth, this is one book where it's easy to figure out what's wrong but doesn't give away much about what's really going on or why any of it is important. And that really bothers me.

Instead, it's a fairly standard story of a girl, well girls Addie and Eva sharing the same body, living in fear of being discovered as one of the 'evil' hybrids, until she ... er they ... finally are. So they're sent to a facility to undergo horrible medical experimentation, naturally. I can replace hybrid with various supernatural creatures like mutant, alien, leprechaun, etc. mad lib style and get a pretty familiar plot I've seen more than enough times, so I really feel this book needed the hybrid concept to stand out on its own in order to set the plot apart - and I don't think it really does. Yeah, there's some emphasis on Eva's struggles as the voice in the back of Addie's head who can't do anything, and I can understand Addie's unwillingness either to share her body or to let Eva die, I wouldn't kill off someone who's become family and friend like that either, but still, I just don't see much of a conflict between Addie and Eva or a conflict between Addie and Eva versus the dystopian society except because of the plot mandated hybrids are evil government. Maybe if Addie wasn't so hard to read as a character, if she'd explained it like being forced to share a body with an imaginary friend who acts like a real person, maybe that's the missing dimension, but then, do you even need a body to be real? I don't get what Eva is trying to get across with her story. Be nice, share (your body)?

I guess I'm really disappointed because after giving me so much to chew on by presenting this interesting (if more than a little underdeveloped society) in the first half, the rest of the story becomes your basic, garden variety dystopian government commits moral outrage under everyone's noses, secret resistance group must uncover truth plot that sheds almost no light on the point of the premise. Instead, there's just distractions like what happens to some of the other hybrids during the unethical medical testing <sup>TM</sup> that's supposed to get me all riled up about how awful it is to be a harmless hybrid being persecuted by the meanie government until Addie and Eva can take no more of it and does something. Good for them, but it really doesn't change the fact that none of the developments really tells me anything about the point of the premise, or even begins to answer any of my questions. Nope, just be happy the good guys are gonna take out said garden variety dystopian government in the sequel.

I'm more than happy to poke through books with unconventional premises like *What's Left of Me*, books that requires an extra bit of thought to make sense of exactly what the author's trying to say. In most cases, I get a read that's absolutely fascinating. But this one I found utterly aggravating because I just don't see the point, either allegory, social critique, or anything other than hey, here's a cool idea, I'm not gonna explain it, but just ignore that and focus on the story. So it's a meh from me.

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## **Stacia (the 2010 club) says**

**Two people - one body.**

**Two personalities - one outward appearance.**

**Two minds - *ONE* person in control.**

It's not very often that I am excited to jump enthusiastically into a book because the first few paragraphs hooked me right from the start. After only a few sentences, I was raring to go. *What's Left of Me* started strong and kept me wanting more chapter after chapter.

### **The book's very first words :**

*Addie and I were born into the same body, our souls' ghostly fingers entwined before we gasped our very first breath. Our earliest years together were also our happiest. Then came the worries - the tightness around our parents' mouths, the frowns lining our kindergarten teacher's forehead, the question everyone whispered when they thought we couldn't hear.*

*Why aren't they settling?*

*Settling.*

*We tried to form the word in our five-year-old mouth, tasting it on our tongue.*

*Set-Tull-Ling.*

*We knew what it meant. Kind of. It meant one of us was supposed to take control. It meant the other was supposed to fade away. I know now that it means much, much more than that.*

I read those first few words and immediately had to know more about these two girls sharing one body.

### **Oh, and one more thing : All children are supposed to settle - *or else*.**

Yes, the dreaded "or else." We'll just say that it's not a good thing if the dominant personality can't kick the weaker personality's ass out of the picture. Picture scary hospitals and terrifying medical procedures and you'll have a small clue of what we're dealing with.

~ *Quick Summary* : Eva and Addie have lived a lie for years, not telling anyone that they share a body. When they cross paths with a couple of other hybrid people like themselves, their quest for knowledge leads

everyone down a dangerous path. ~

**What I liked the most about this book** was that the voices of the weaker personalities were the ones pushed to the forefront. Perhaps in future books we'll get to explore the flipside, but I thought it was a great start for a series to see the world through the eyes of the people who were fighting to have some shred of control within their own bodies.

There were several moments as I read in which I found myself asking the questions, "What would it feel like? What would I do?" Any time a book can drop me in the middle of a situation and have me imagining how the scenario would go if I was having to make the decisions, this is a good thing.

*What's Left of Me* did have a character body-sharing experience similar to *The Host* but the story itself was not the same. There were no aliens and no body snatching in WLoM. However, I found myself perfectly content with the condition of the people in this story happening because of a genetic occurrence. I've never quite read about hybrids like these.

Two enthusiastic thumbs up for a promising start to a great series concept. Book 1's adventures left me wondering what's in store for installment number 2. I can't wait to find out!

*This book was provided from the publisher through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.*

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**Jessie (Ageless Pages Reviews) says**

**Read This Review & More Like It On My Blog!**

This was the perfect novel to bust me out of my bad book reading funk. The majority of last several books I've read had been frustrating, time-consuming, and often, disappointing. Happily, that is far from the case with *What's Left of Me*. Though this debut novel is far from being free of all errors, Kat Zhang's first novel in the Hybrid Chronicles manages to be innovative, engrossing, unique, and affecting. I absolutely could not, and did not want to, put it down; this was another one-day read for me. With shades of *The Golden Compass*, *Never Let Me Go* and *Unwind*, all three of which are among my favorite-ever books, this novel is sure to entertain and engage, all the while making its rapt readers think. This is one of those rare YA novels that could, and does and will, hold a wide appeal for readers of different ages and genre preferences.

There's a lot to recommend about this novel. It's action-packed and also contemplative; it's filled with remarkable, highly individual characters and strong characterization; it's a fresh, innovative concept coupled with great storytelling. I love it wholeheartedly, even with its issues. The few things that missed with *What's Left of Me* only slightly detract from the overwhelming good about it. There are some sections that could use some tightening, some periods where the fluid pacing gets a bit stuck, but on the whole, this is a **great** book. One I would easily and happily push on my fellow bloggers, friends, and family. I felt that the ending was a bit rushed, with some key plot points left too vague and undetailed (the surgery, the tech, the drugs, etc.), but

I was left with a unquenchable need for the second book as soon I as I metaphorically turned the last page.

The dystopian elements of the world shown are bare, and sketched in only slightly more as the story progresses, but I... didn't mind all that much. I often harp on worldbuilding, especially with fantasy and dystopian novels, and while *What's Left of Me* left some principle explanations missing in action, the characters and the plot of the novel more than made up for the lack. This is a solid, well-constructed novel and while the book's momentum hits a few snags as it moves quickly along, the emotion and relationship I had invested/built in Addie/Eva's struggle for life was more than enough to keep me fully engrossed. The other characters are almost uniformly remarkable and well-rounded, highly individual even in their twinned souls, but it was the two main characters that meant the most to me.

A few other quibbles: I found the main antagonist of the novel to be rather weak, and sadly one-dimensional in his presentation. I wished for more of a presence for him, felt that would have added more of a sense of tension to the atmosphere of the book, and for what he represented for the hybrids, but that never materialized. I also thought that the "twist" revealed at the end was a bit too open-ended and an obvious lead to buy the next book and it felt superfluous to the already-engaging plot of the novel. But like I said, these are minor complaints in the face of all the awesome shown and revealed here in *What's Left of Me*.

This is a great novel; entertaining and horrific at the same time. It's one that I will be buying a finished copy of as soon as it is available, because rereads of *What's Left of Me* are going to be necessary. I'm very impressed with Zhang's storytelling ability, as well as her obvious talent for innovative, creative plots and for crafting real, flawed, human characters. Read this book, especially if you're a fan of *Unwind*, *Never Let Me Go* and/or *The Golden Compass* -- for once the hype and the comparisons are dead on. I can't recommend this one highly enough.

Also: I have to note that the cover is completely perfect. Two people in one body? Creepy, awesome, eye-catching. This is not one to miss, for many reasons!

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## D.G. says

*Check out this review and others at [www.badassbookreviews.com](http://www.badassbookreviews.com)*

*What's Left of Me* is a book with no easy answers. The first book in the Hybrid Chronicles series tells the story of Eva and Addie, two souls that share one body. According to the laws of their country, Eva – the recessive or “weaker” soul – should have disappeared in childhood but she’s held on, unbeknownst to her parents and society. She can’t control the body but shares her thoughts with Addie and witnesses everything that Addie does, even her dreams.

This book takes *The Host* to the next level but without an obvious solution. I was very conflicted as I read along because I could understand everybody’s point of view. I felt for Eva, who for all intents and purposes is a vegetable with absolutely no say in the actions of her body – I’d hyperventilate just thinking of not being able to move. I felt bad for Addie, who’s had one instance of privacy in her life – having to account for my actions every minute of every day would drive me bunkers. I felt bad for the parents, who wanted the best for their children but had to make a terrible decision. I even felt bad for the “villains” here. Are they ‘evil’ just for believing the status quo and the medical information of the day? I’m sure that people in the future will scoff at our over medicated society – just the way we do when we think of “blood-letting” or other primitive forms of medical treatment – but does that mean that doctors today are ‘evil’ for trying to solve every

problem with medications?

Evolutionarily, having a world full of hybrids “fighting” with themselves doesn’t make much sense – any trait that makes it difficult for a being to survive will make it go extinct. Just imagine the number of suicides and accidents if you had two people fighting for control of a body! But the premise made me think a lot so I’ll waive my evolutionary concerns.

Ms. Zhang did a good job identifying the important characters so their personalities went beyond the physical and the hybrids were different enough that they felt like two people even if they inhabited the same body. Although Eva would always say who it was, the reader really got the impression there were different people when you heard about Ryan, Devon, Hally and Lissa. Addie was a little more indistinct – you just had an impression of unhappiness and conflict – so I really hope to learn more about her in the next book.

The most important lesson of this story is that it reminds the reader to question the status quo. My husband is a college professor and he despairs at how much his students just accept whatever they are told without questioning. It’s not easy to discover that things are not black and white, that good parents can be wrong, that the media has an agenda, that interest groups have more say in the happenings in government but if we don’t learn to think critically, things will never improve. Where would we be if the Founding Fathers hadn’t decided to buck the beliefs of a lifetime and challenge the King?

I don’t know how this will end up but I definitely want to find out.

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## **Jennifer says**

Addie and Eva are two souls in one body. They were supposed to settle around 4 years old, 10 years at the very latest. Settle on which soul will stay and which soul will fade away. Settle on which soul is dominant and will get to live. Eva didn't want to give up on life. She fought as hard as she could. But by 12 years old Addie had to settle and hide Eva's existence or risk being sent away to doctors and experiments and possible death. Eva shouldn't be there and no one can know. Eva continues to watch but she can no longer take control.

The two people in one mind idea kind of reminded me of *The Host* by Stephanie Meyer. One girl has full control while the other is just observing with no control to speak or move. Just trapped inside. Sounds like a horrible life! The book is told in the POV of the non-dominant soul Eva. Eva helps remind Addie and they keep each other company. They try to sneak by in their illegal existence until they meet a new friend Hally/Lissa who is also hiding the fact that she is a hybrid. Her brother Devon/Ryan is another hybrid. They want to teach Eva how to take control again but it is not so easy and not so easily hidden.

The book was easy to follow considering the two people in one mind aspect. Eva always talks about everything as "ours" which takes a little getting used to. The idea of two people in one head had my mind reeling. I kept thinking what if Eva falls for Ryan, which is what I kind of felt happening, then does Addie have to fall for Devon? What if they both don't fall for the two guys in one body? What do they do during sexy times? LOL When one girl is in control and the other is just observing?! Freaky! A lot of the questions I had, sadly were not brought up until the very end.

The book had little romance and was a bit slow during the middle but the whole idea was so intriguing that I was still glued to the pages. It was just so sad to imagine having to lose a part of yourself. Think of growing

up with another person and then having to let them fade away. The government claimed two souls fighting in one body causes chaos and war in other places around the world. I would assume if two souls was the way we were born that we would figure a way to make it work. I think we will get more into that knowledge in the next book. Can't wait to see what happens next with the hybrids!

-I'm sorry- Addie said. -I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I tried---

-It's okay- I said, because what else was I supposed to say? She was Addie. She was the other half to me. She was more important than anyone.

-I just never thought- She covered our face with our hands, trying to muffle her tears. -I never thought---

Never thought she'd have to watch, feel, as we kissed someone she didn't want to. That had been my private fear.

My burden.

I didn't know what to say.

As they talk to each other in the book it is in But goodreads is trying to italicize that so I'm using - -

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## **Sarah Maas says**

Brilliant, heartbreaking, and absolutely unforgettable! I adored this book. :)

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## **Steph Sinclair says**

Actual rating: 4.5 stars

Dystopian novels have been disappointing me left and right these days. I don't know why. I'm not *that* hard to please. Yeah, I see your eyes rolling at that. \*grin\* But seriously, give me likable characters, solid world building and a good conspiracy theory and I'm good to go. Well, I guess there are only so many ways to tell the story of a deranged society killing off its children for the greater good. So, I went into *What's Left of Me* with, how do I say this? Er... low expectations. And wow. I was not expecting to love this book, but wow. I absolutely LOVED it! I mean, geez. Where do I even begin? Should I start at the premise? How about the realistic characters? Or maybe I should just make this entire review into a fangirl's shrine of amazing prose? This book is all of those things and more.

Let me start with that gorgeous cover for a minute. I have a confession, which is more or less public information: I'm a cover whore. There. I totes said it. Yes, yes. I know the drill, "BOO, YOU WHORE!" It's just that I get a peek of a beautiful cover and my eyes gloss over with desire. I know I should heed the advice and not judge the book based on the cover, but I can't help it. I'm a judgy little judger. Usually, this just sets me up for a supreme let down when I actually get a chance to read the book. But occasionally, I find those diamonds in the roughs like *What's Left of Me*, where not only does the cover scream, "Pick me up, dammit, and read me!" but the story fully captivates me. That is the bread and the apple butter, my friends.

And not only does the cover look stunning, but it truly captures Eva and Addie. Eva, the recessive soul that



should have disappeared according to her society, was born and marked for death. And Addie, the dominate soul, destined to forget her best friend and other half. But they share a secret. They are hybrids, a title coined to those with recessive souls that refused to just fade away. To the government they are deemed a threat to society and therefore must be locked up, contained, fixed or be killed.

The best part of *What's Left of Me* was the relationship between Addie and Eva. I have to sit and applaud Zhang's skill at crafting two very different characters, who share the same body, yet they struggle to portray just one person to everyone else. Against her better judgement, Addie agrees to practice letting Eva take control of their body. She knows what this could mean for them if they are caught and discovered. However, she also knows how much it means to Eva to not just be the soul everyone else thinks is gone. Eva wants to be real. So they take the risk and their worst fears are, unfortunately, realized.

We'd been born with our souls' fingers interlocked. What if we'd never let go?

The bond and love these two sister had for one another was phenomenal and, at times, tear jerking. Though, I should say I did not cry during this novel. But I will say it was deeply emotional when the sisters internally struggled to fulfill both souls' needs without depriving the other. Of course, this was nearly impossible. Eva is the recessive soul and as such is used to literally taking the backseat to whatever Addie needs or wants. At times that frustrated me to no end because I could just feel Eva ready to burst free and be her own person, but Addie would take those moments away from her.

I was caged in our body and caged in his arms and, somehow, the former was the real prison.

And while I remained angry at Addie for her selfishness, Eva not once blamed her sister for the way she felt. That is not to say they always got along. There were quite a few times they stopped talking to each other in the novel, but I just loved how they made up. Side note: Can you imagine having a fight with your sibling *in your head*? I mean, if my sister and I shared one body... let's just say it'd be WW3 up in there. There'd be major ass kicking. **Bet on it.** Probably something along the lines of this:

Any who...

Not only did Zhang have to keep track of Addie and Eva's characters, but she created two characters in one body in several different instances. Now, I know from reading that sentence, that may A) not make a lot of sense or B) not sound very difficult. But it fascinated me how Zhang pulled it off. There were times where Addie and Eva would be talking with a character only for him/her to switch mid-conversation to their other soul. So you have two different mannerisms, facial expressions, tone, ect. for this one person and you have Addie and Eva able to not only tell the difference between the two, but to also convince the *reader* of the switch. And I'll even take it a step further to say that after a certain point I could tell which soul was who before Addie and Eva confirmed it for me. I think this is a testament to just how well these characters were crafted.

And that is where the pacing and plot come into play. At first I thought the book was moving too fast in the beginning because I was getting introduced to a bunch of new characters and STUFF was happening very quickly, but I think it works well that way. Looking back, *What's Left of Me* doesn't really have much

downtime because something is always happening, but at the same time it doesn't read like a thriller either because it's not exactly action packed. Oxymoron? Why, yes. But it was riveting and I felt I NEEDED to figure out the mystery to why the hybrids were treated so badly. Interestingly, I would usually take this time to point out and complain about world building flaws. There is very little mention of the outside world and how they deal with hybrids. BUT, and you're going to have to trust me on this, it *works* in this instance. The reader is intentionally kept in the dark until a few plot twists are revealed. Even after completing the novel, I feel like there is so much more to come.

So, yeah, I rambled there a bit, but this novel was so fascinating and awesome. After all that I just have one last thing to say: More now, please.

*ARC was provided by the publisher via Edelweiss. Thank you!*

More reviews and other fantastical things at Cuudlebuggery Book Blog.

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## Rose says

**Initial thoughts:** I know what you're thinking: "Rose! Woman! 3-stars? *3-stars!* Explain yourself this minute! You said you really liked this book, why are you giving it only 3-stars?!"

I'll explain, I promise. XD First things first, I have to give it to Kat Zhang; her narrative kept me reading through this book from beginning to end, and I liked the premise of the story. For a good while, it kept me engaged in the toggle between Eva and Addie's personalities. The beginning of the novel was VERY good.

I think somewhere around the middle to 60%, the momentum the story had in the beginning started to slow down, and the worldbuilding - collectively speaking - left me with a lot of questions. I also think that, despite the minimal focus on the romance (which was a GOOD thing in this book), I still felt like it wasn't quite vetted out as much as I would've liked to see.

I did like "What's Left of Me" overall, I just didn't love it as much as I thought I would given some caveats. I do think that this will appeal to quite a bit of people, though.

## Full review:

"What's Left of Me" is an interesting book to reflect upon, in my vision of things. The concept of it, by far, is one of the most intriguing premises I've come across in the past year in YA fiction. The idea of twin souls sharing one body isn't new, but the fact that they have to compete for existence where it means that one of them may potentially be erased is heartbreaking, especially if those souls "complete" each other in a sense. Addie and Eva, in their initial interactions are shown to be souls that care for each other and never want to pull apart despite sharing one body and Addie being the dominant figure. I found that bond compelling in parts of this novel as I read through it. I also found that the measure this society can recognize this phenomenon fascinating, and that they would take an active stance against erasing multiple souls to be jarring, especially with such a close bond to consider.

But the question my mind tried to figure in this collective book was - why? Why did the society see the hybrids as a threat? Why were they so adamant about ridding of them? If a society is to be believed, there has to be a motivation behind the impending threat. Even if it's just to establish them as an aberration, I

would've expected a little more expansion on that than what this book offered. Heck, even Dan Wells - with his work on "Partials" - showcased the divide between the societies in the world that he created. This book didn't quite show that divide, so it was difficult to see the passions/motivations behind the procedures and some of the things that Eva and Addie observed.

I did admire, however, the way Zhang creates the narrative in how Addie and Eva worked against their constrictions. Granted, Addie wasn't always happy about Eva trying to exert control, and the two argued contentiously about the push for dominance and working against the norm, but neither one of them wanted the other to face erasure. That to me was probably the most compelling part of the novel, in addition to some jarring betrayals and chase scenes where those challenging the status quo are taken to be "corrected".

I think there are points of the novel that are hit and miss. The very beginning of the novel has fluid progression and exchanges that show the impending threat to the girls. Yet, about midway through the novel - I'll admit there were parts that dragged on a bit more than they should've for the subject matter. The push toward the end is where the novel's momentum picked up speed again, with some creative leaps that I wish had more expansion - like the nature of the operations, the establishment they were in, among other factors. The worldbuilding in this is very light, so for me it was harder to delve into than I would've otherwise. It left me with many questions as to how certain things came to be and if it were just a bit fuller, I think I would've ranked this higher.

There was also the matter of the romance in this book - I'm actually happy it takes a backseat to developing the tensions and connection between Addie and Eva, but I still felt that the element was so light that it lacked enough development to pull me in - it had me at a bit of arms length as I read it. I felt the characters cared for each other, certainly, but not the pull where that tie was substantiated enough to engross or enthrall me.

I think younger teens and those that are looking for a light dystopian novel with interesting elements would likely enjoy "What's Left of Me", because the idea of it is well thought, and this novel has its moments of harrowing conflict. I think, however, with a little more development, this could've been a fuller experience than what was. Still good, but not to the level that I think some further focus would've brought to the table. I'm certainly invested enough in the book to see what happens to Addie and Eva from here on, and its an interesting start to this series.

Overall: 3/5

Note: I received this as an ARC from Edelweiss, from the publisher HarperCollins/HarperTeen.

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## **Eunice says**

The first time I saw this I wasn't really that interested. Although the premise does sound intriguing it wasn't that enough for me to be very excited about this one. So when I saw this in Edelweiss I wasn't really planning on requesting it, however my fingers have their own minds and took the liberty to click it and started typing why I wanted a review copy. And to my surprise I actually got approved. Then comes the glowing reviews from my GR friends and I was like, maybe I should thank my fingers for requesting this, this could only be so good. And so I read it and boy I couldn't thank my fingers more because this book is just great, really great!

The originality of this book is one of the major aspects that made this book so good and very intriguing. The

concept of this book was definitely a first for me; I never encountered a book with the idea of a world where people lived with two souls. That idea although made me interested also made me anxious to read it; wouldn't it be difficult? How can I like the MC if there are two personalities in them? How could there be a romance in this one? Wouldn't that be awkward? Can the author pull it off?

But all those worries soon fade away as I find myself gradually being devoured by the author's writing! Kat Zhang is an amazing writer and she definitely pulled this one off! Her writing was simple but gorgeous and the pacing was comfortably fast. The world and the characters she created were all very well thought and written. The world-building is one of a kind and although I had some little issues with it (view spoiler) I can wait for them to be resolved more in the following books. The characters were my favorite part of this book. I loved how she wrote them especially the relationship of the sisters, Addie and Eva.

The relationship and the emotional struggles they had were very realistic and heartbreaking. I saw the conflicting feelings each shared with one another. And how they struggled in doing and choosing things they wanted for their own but not wanting to hurt or be selfish to the other one. I love how Zhang showed that with all the hurting, Eva and Addie really care and love each other. Through the different circumstances and obstacles thrown to Addie and Eva we were able to see the two differently - how they take and handle things, how they talk and think, their expressions and mannerism. So as the story went on, when they shift it wasn't really confusing. She wrote the sisters in a way that we could really see them separately, two entirely different and unique characters, sharing one body.

Other characters like Hally and Lissa, Devon and Ryan, and Kitty and Nina were great supporting characters. They were never left on the sides and I liked how they contributed on the development of the main character.

There's a very light touch of romance in this one and it surprised me that it was actually fine with me. Because I am a major sap and I love romance! It's one of the things I always consider when reading a book but throughout the course of the story I was just so busy thinking of how they're gonna overcome their problems and obstacles. So when this one sweet moment came I was just like, aww. It made me really smile and for some reason I was pretty satisfied with it...for now, even though I still have very little idea of how the romance will gonna work. But I hope it would be more apparent in the next book.

With original plot, great world-building, and well written characters this book promises a definitely wonderful and engaging reading experience. This book did not disappoint. I highly recommend this.

*\*Thanks to Edelweiss and HarperCollins for providing an ARC of this book!*

This review is also posted at Book Overdose

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## **Beckie says**

Review can also be found on my blog: [HERE!](#)

I was given a copy of the book back in June and was so happy once I got it in the mail. The cover is gorgeous and plays so well with the concept behind the story. Right from the start when I heard about What's Left of Me on goodreads I knew I wanted to have a arc to read for a review on my blog. I was so intrigued by the plot and characters within. Addie and Eve's story presented itself to be most fascinating to me. I love the idea of one body sharing two souls. The concept is so very unique and refreshing. Author Kat Zhang has

truly blown me away with her impressive writing technique and ability to make the story come to life on paper. This debut novel has topped by Top Ten list of favorite books. Two Soul's sharing one body...the story of Addie and Eva given life to by such an amazing new author.

Addie and Eva live in a world where humans are born with two soul's in one body. One is dominate and the other submissive. The submissive soul is supposed to fade away leaving the dominate one alone. Eva has always known that she is the lesser of the two but chooses not to leave her sister even though she should. This choice to live their lives together but never telling anyone else for this would be dangerous and go against all that is right.

When Addie/Eva meet a girl from school and her brother they come to find out that they are not alone in the secret they both share. The choices they soon will come to make have both Addie and Eva now fighting for there lives. Both of the girls now must bond together tighter than ever before in a fight to remain whole.

Oh. My. God! This book just totally rocked my socks off. I could not get enough! The world building in the book is so very flawless and rich with detail. Both Addie and Eva's characters are so genuine, and full of one life. Even though they share one body both girls have totally different character traits and identities. I loved Eva most because she always knew what she wanted and what she believed it even though it was hard to. I found Addie to be much more of a worrier and questioning things she feared.

Beyond Addie/Eva the secondary characters really helped to bring the whole book together and really enriched the plot. Thus giving the story such a unique balance of adventure and charm. I love every page, every word! I can't wait to get my hands out the next installment to what will happen next! For anyone who may have mixed feeling about reading What's Left of Me once it comes out, DON'T! This book is too good not to be given the chance.

Thank you to HarperCollins for my ARC and Kat Zhang for writing such a beautiful story.

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## **Katy says**

4.5 stars - ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!!! My half-star complaint is for the somewhat anticlimactic end (see below).

Why did I love this book so much? Because the concept was actually mind-blowing. To be born with two souls and to become the dominant soul and to have the other naturally fade away - I can't even imagine how it feels to lose a part of myself like that. The prologue had me hooked, and the rest of the story sure didn't disappoint.

But what made the book so great was that Zhang let Eva be the narrator, even though she was the recessive soul. To let herself just fade into the background but never totally fade away is so heartbreaking, knowing you could never BE. But instead of feeling resentment, Eva supported Addie in places where Addie fell short - but with reminders and words of encouragement rather than taking action. The bond that Addie and Eva have and the dialogue that goes on between them is just indescribable. Zhang did a truly amazing job putting readers there, making us sympathize with both Addie and Eva. Both girls had their strengths and their weaknesses, and they compliment each other very well.

I'm really curious to see what direction Zhang plans to take this series. Of course, readers would naturally want things to work out with Addie and Eva where both will be able to have their time in their body. But we already see how different the two are and how this can cause a problem in their future if they were both to survive (view spoiler) Jackson gives us a hint, but you're left to wonder if both girls can truly be happy and how certain arrangement will be made.

And for those, like me, who have to have romance in their books, don't expect too much of it in this one. There is a love interest, but there's not much, and when there is, it's pretty subtle. But it actually didn't bother me in this book.

But Zhang did a good job pacing the book, first sucking us in by the intriguing concept and later keeping us on the edge with anticipation about what's going to happen next.

My half-star criticism is I felt the end was a bit anticlimactic. The ironic thing is I had made a comment that I would be pissed if this book ended with a cliff hanger. And it didn't. So what's my problem? I'm not sure, but I felt something was just missing. (view spoiler) I guess if this book wasn't a start of a series, I would be perfectly happy with how things were packaged at the end. But I can't wait to see what Zhang has in stored for the sequel.

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## Giselle says

Imagine never being alone in your head, always having someone else tag along wherever you go, never ever getting any privacy. Kat Zhang has created this alternate world where humans are born with two souls until one takes over and "settles". Except, Eva and Addie never did.

Eva and Addie, two completely different personalities are sharing one body - or more like, Eva is stuck in Addie's head, as Eva has not been able to take control in years. I found this very thought provoking as well as fascinating. For someone who has always been especially curious to know how Siamese twins live, I found myself quite taken by this premise. The simple thought of never being truly by yourself is scary, having to share every single thing with another self. It's intimidating to say the least. I wish it had gone deeper, however. Since this book takes place in the Americas where souls eventually settle, meaning one leaves, or dies--however you want to look at it--we don't necessarily observe how those who do keep both souls--hybrids--actually live out their lives. So many scenarios come into play when you question this way of living, I was a little bit let down to see this not explored further. Another world building issue that became a pretty big factor in my not truly loving this novel is how we never really get the motivation behind the whole plot. To realize the dangers of being a hybrid, to feel the intensity this novel tries to evoke, I need to be able to understand *why* hybrids are treated as a threat and a danger to society. The minute explanation we do get--that hybrids, being constantly on the outs with themselves, can become unstable--is weak and unconvincing of the threat these people make them out to be.

As far as characters go, the ones we meet in this novel are all fairly well developed and enjoyable. I was especially impressed with how different, yet how fitting both of the main characters were. Told in Eva's POV--the soul hiding in Addie's body--what we get is a very peculiar narration. Since Eva isn't in control of their body, she narrates mostly by going over what Addie is doing, referring to things as "ours": *Our* hands, *our* face, *we* walked, etc. I was sometimes thrown off by it, but it's a unique way to position a story and also a great method to get us to understand a bit more profoundly what it means to have to share a body with another. This psychological aspect is extremely enticing, leaving us with a sense of curiosity and wonder. As

much as I enjoyed Eva's considerate personality, never blaming Addie for her selfish ways, I found Addie herself to be a little less pleasant. While I understand that it must be extremely hard to live this kind of life, she can come off as very self-centered, because of which I can't say I particularly liked her.

With a very intriguing start, *What's Left Of Me* soon loses its flair around the half way mark when things start to slow down exponentially. Due to the lack of world building I mentioned, I never got a big feeling of restlessness or foreboding from this novel, making their foray into the hospital a little long-winded. Some chain of events felt like a go-around to try to work in some deeper character/psychological aspect into the novel, which is fine, but unfortunately it also caused the plot to become stagnant.

What it comes down to is a novel that has a highly thought-provoking plot with fascinating character relationships and a promising start to a series. With a little more world building, a little more answers behind the hybrids, the severity of it all would have been much more poignant, turning it into a stronger, more compelling novel. It is definitely a series that I will continue as, for the most part, it did keep my attention fully. As well, I'm sure we will get some further examination into what I'm dying to know in the next installments.

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*An advance copy was provided by the publisher for review.*

For more of my reviews, visit my blog at [Xpresso Reads](#)

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## **Ari says**

### **THE GOOD**

#### *The concept:*

I won't tell you how unique the idea is, because you see, I've read *The Host* a while ago and 2 souls in one body, one not fading away is not really something new for me. But a story doesn't need 100% originality to be a good story. It needs to have an interesting plot that makes you turn page after page, it needs a pack of great characters to make you wish to know more about them, it needs an intrigue to keep you up all night reading and it needs a great ending that might make you want to read the next book (because yeah, this is a series).

But what I liked the most was the emotional writing.

I loved how close Abbie and Eva were. You could always tell them apart because deep inside they were as different as twins can be, as siblings can be, as people can be.

I loved how I could relate with both of them, how I wished for them to find a way to be happy sharing the same body, I loved how both made an impression on me – they were like 2 different sides of the same coin. You wouldn't want one without the other. You couldn't choose whom to stay, whom to fade away. They were both right even when they wanted different things (incompatible even) and it broke my heart to see how one's happiness brought unhappiness for the other.

I understood Addie, yes she was a bit selfish at times, but all she wanted was a normal life.

She also cared for Eva and when she gave her the one thing that made her happy (a tiny bit of control) they

got into trouble – didn't she have the right to be angry? Also the relationship between Ryan and Eva was a struggle for her, she didn't want to have anything to do with Devon/Ryan and Hally/Lissa, but she quite had no choice and I can understand her side in this.

*The cover:*

Oh, it is so beautiful. I should have started with it as it grabbed my attention from the first moment I saw it, and it has so much to do with the storyline. Wonderful indeed!

## THE NOT-SO-GOOD

To put it simple: the second half of the book.

As emotional as the first half was for me, the second one left me in a state of indifference.

I don't like it when things are made simple for the main characters and they don't do much hard work to stay out of trouble or to manage to get out of a tough situation (the "escaping" was poorly managed and it left me with a bit of a bitter taste).

Even the love story seemed forced, it happened too quick and without much background. The two characters involved didn't spend enough time together to really know each other before everything started to fall apart so I couldn't relate with their emotions at all. Add to this the fact that we have 2 souls in both bodies and it will make for a quite awkward situation.

Still, I did enjoy this book and I might even get to read the next one when it comes out.

There were some predictable moments, but they didn't take away the pleasure of reading this story. There are still many questions to be answered, but I guess we'll find more in the sequel.

Hope you'll enjoy it too.

Happy midnight reading!

*\* This review can also be found at [ReadingAfterMidnight.com](http://ReadingAfterMidnight.com)*

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## Emily May says

When compared to most other dystopian novels I've read this year, *What's Left of Me* is pretty good overall. I found it very easy to get into and the characters quickly became ones I cared about. But, once again, there's just too little explanation for this to get more than three stars. The dystopian genre was born with novels like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which so expertly explored the political and social implications of having a society under strict government control and surveillance. More modern examples from the genre often fail to give us any idea how the society came about or the details of why things are like they are.

In this story, people are born with two souls in every body. But as time progresses, one soul becomes the dominant and the other will fade away and eventually disappear (usually by age ten). However, some never



lose the weaker soul and they remain paralyzed inside their shared body, unable to move or speak and completely controlled by the will of the dominant soul. Addie and Eva are one example of such a case - they are called "hybrids" and must hide their secret from society or face being institutionalised. When the possibility of restoring the control of Eva to how it was when they were younger arises, the girls face tough decisions, harsh realities and risk putting themselves in danger of being found out.

What I most want to know is why the hybrids are such a massive threat to society? There was a brief discussion about this on one of my status updates and one of the suggestions seems to be that the government feared that two souls would heighten the risk of insanity and therefore lead to possible chaos. I'm sorry, but after completing the novel I'm just not buying into that. I like this whole idea of bodies having two souls and the problems it would cause, but I can't really see it as a threat to society. I also think that Hally's arrest wasn't very smooth and the reasons for it weren't convincing; it felt unnatural and an obvious ploy to get the plot to move in a certain direction.

One of the best things about *What's Left of Me* is the relationship between Addie and Eva, they have such distinct personalities but work extremely well together too. I could feel Eva's frustration and sadness, but I also could feel Addie's doubt and reservations. The romance, thankfully, is very much in the background and is almost non-existent until the end - which I think works far better in this kind of life-threatening scenario. It also begins to raise questions which I've always wondered about in Siamese twin relationships - what do you do about having a romantic relationship when you share your body? What happens when you like someone but your twin doesn't? I may have to read the sequel just to find out some answers about that.

I liked it. I did. But there were too many of the same old issues that I just get sick of writing about now. The personal level of the novel was brilliant - even though I would question the behaviour of the girls' parents - but on a bigger scale it just didn't deliver. We know very little about this alternative United States beyond the government's obsession with hybrids, we are told vaguely something about the rest of the world being overrun with hybrids and we are also told that hybrids are sent off to special clinics where they are never seen again.

Hopefully, there's some upcoming twist about this reason for the fear and hate of the hybrids because I'm not believing it so far. Even forgetting the fact that it's quite a weak explanation, they're saying that being a hybrid increases your risk of insanity... right? This belief must either be correct or incorrect... right? So, they should obviously be observing the hybrids they have in captivity... right? What I'm saying is, there's an answer to this question and the government must know it: are the hybrids more at risk of mental illness or not? The only way I can see the author rectifying this little issue is if she has a big twist up her sleeves about some other *real* reason the hybrids are seen as a problem. So I shall read on and find out.

**A copy of this was provided free in exchange for a review from the UK publisher.**

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## **Erin Bowman says**

I have been fortunate enough to read this upcoming debut early, and I am so very grateful! The novel follows Addie and Eva, two souls living in one body. Souls are expected to settle at a young age, picking one to dominate while the other fades into oblivion. In Addie and Eva's case, neither girl wins out and the girls live with Eva's identity still present, but secret. The way dialog is handled between these two girls is fascinating, often treated like an internal monolog. Where most people would say "I," they say "we." I want to say this is a story about sisters, but it's not. Not really. Addie and Eva share an even tighter bond, and their relationship

in this book is simultaneously beautiful and claustrophobic. They are never one without the other.

Originally reviewed [here](#).

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## TheBookSmugglers says

Originally Reviewed on The Book Smugglers

Addie and Eva. Eva and Addie. From birth, the two souls have shared the same breath and heartbeat, occupied the same flesh, inseparably intertwined. The girls are twin souls, hybrid souls - and like everyone else born in the world, they grow together sharing their every thought and feeling with the other. As the years pass, they also fight for control of their shared body, learning who is stronger and who is weaker. Because in Addie and Eva's world, by the age of 10, a dominant soul is meant to emerge, the recessive soul meant to simply fade away, as though it never existed. Addie and Eva are different, though, and as the years pass, Eva refuses to disappear. The neighbors talk, the kids at school stare, and the government doctors step in. At the age of 12, after tests and treatments and thorough examination, Addie is declared "normal" and Eva is no more.

Except that Eva did not disappear, and still lives and breathes. Addie and Eva, Eva and Addie are Hybrid. After years of ceaseless war between normal, single soul Americans and invading monstrous Hybrids, fear of Hybrids is pervasive and without compare. This is Addie and Eva's greatest secret, and if they are to be discovered and revealed as a Hybrid, they will be imprisoned, killed, or worse.

So one day, when a strange girl at school named Hallie begins to relentlessly seek out Addie, Addie and Eva are terrified that she knows their secret. But that's when Addie and Eva learn that Hallie is just like them, a secret hybrid - but Hallie's other soul, Lissa, has the control and ability to *move* and talk on her own. Eva, who has been a passenger for so long, who has only ever been able to talk to Addie in her mind, will do anything to learn how Hallie and Lissa coexist. Even if it means risking their greatest, most guarded secret.

The debut novel from author Kat Zhang, *What's Left of Me* is a new entry in the sci-fi dystopia YA realm - an overpopulated, largely bland and somewhat homogenous landscape with a few amazing, brightly shining exceptions. Whenever I find a new novel of this particular subgenre, I am wary, but try to be cautiously optimistic - yes, there are many bland Not Dystopias that seem to use a pale, halfbaked totalitarian society as a mere backdrop for contrived insta-romance. At the same time, this is one of my most beloved subgenres, and home to many of my favorite books - from *The Giver* through *Obernewtyn*, *The Knife of Never Letting Go* through *Blood Red Road*.

It was with trepidation that I began *What's Left of Me*; it was with complete and rapt exhilaration that I finished the book. *What's Left of Me* is an original, harrowing, and unforgettable novel, and I loved every second of it.

The thing that first caught my eye about Zhang's debut novel was the conceit of two different souls born into the same body, living together until one emerges dominant and the other dissolves. In Eva and Addie's case, though, the two souls remain occupying the same flesh - which seems impossible, doesn't it? How could you live with two completely different entities within, knowing each other's every thought and experience? How could two souls live together and have one fall in love?

The very idea of Hybrids is fascinating, but more importantly, Zhang delivers in the execution of this unique concept brilliantly, through clever writing and the characterization of Eva. *What's Left of Me* is narrated by Eva, Addie's repressed soul who has clung tooth and nail to life - or whatever small semblance of life she can have as a secret observer to Addie's life, communicating only with Addie. From the time they were children, both accepted and loved by their family and society in the years before they were due to Settle, Addie was always the dominant one, quicker and stronger than Eva in controlling their body. And, through Eva's perspective, we see just how isolated she is, how cruel her very existence is - Addie gets to walk and talk and live, while Eva is a secret that no one can ever know about. Not her parents, not her brother, *no one*. Yet for this, Eva isn't resentful or bitter - but when she is given the chance to move and live like Addie, it makes sense that she desperately clings to that possibility, regardless of the risk involved. At the same time, even though the book is narrated by Eva, we also learn and feel for and understand Addie, too - who must love and resent Eva's existence, keeping her from being "normal" but at the same time her greatest confidant and an inseparable part of her. It's amazing to read the kind of quiet symbiosis the two souls have achieved - at one point, Addie and Eva fight and stop talking to each other, and as a result, Addie forgets where her hairbrush is, or to turn off her alarm because Eva is the observant one that reminds Addie to do these things each day. Little touches like that add a believable dynamic to the girls' complicated relationship.

*What's Left of Me* also weaves the nature of these conflicted dual souls into the writing of the book - we can *see* Eva and Addie's relationship change as the pronouns start to shift, from me and mine to us and ours. Addie begins to vocalize the forbidden "us" in reference to herself and Eva; Eva does not feel guilt for her existence and feels tactile things and emotions of her own volition. This is incredibly, mind-blowingly effective, and I love the careful even-handedness of this narrative development.

On the dystopia-meter, *What's Left of Me* also delivers. The xenophobia that characterizes the novel - the intense fear and hatred of the Other in the form of Hybrids is palpable and exceptionally well done in this book. Addie and Eva's world is truly a dystopian one, and their society guards terrible secrets - what happens to those children who don't Settle and emerge with one Dominant soul? Why are there Hybrids in the first place? There's so much more, too - there's a *Golden Compass* sort of horror and reveal at what exactly is being done to children Hybrids taken in by the government. There's the characters of Hallie and Lissa, and her older brother Devon and recessive soul Ryan - who comes to mean something very important to Eva. There are nefarious and conflicted doctors alike, and, most of all, there are other, much larger reveals about the nature of this future America and its place in the rest of the world.

In short, allow me to summarize: *What's Left of Me* is a dazzling, utterly memorable first novel, and in the running for one of my top ten favorite books of the year. *This* is the stuff of great science fiction dystopia, YA or adult alike. Absolutely, wholeheartedly, emphatically recommended.

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## Aa'Ishah says

### 4.5 stars

I kept meaning to read this book for so long. The reviews trickled in, my reading pile grew, my workload climbed ever higher...and as time went on this book was pushed to the back of my mind, in the farthest corner, and left there to gather dust, until finally. *Finally*, I read it. And it surpassed any expectations I ever had.

In Eva and Addie's world, each person born into the world is actually two people, where one body is home to

two souls. Of those two souls, one is dominant and one recessive, and it is the latter that is supposed to eventually fade in childhood. In this case, Eva is the recessive soul - but she didn't fade. Tests were run, theories were made, until finally Addie was pronounced healthy. All this time, Addie has had to pretend that she's normal like any other person, because hybrids are the biggest thing that people have been taught to fear. This goes on until Eva and Addie discover that there may be a cure, a way for Eva to have her own control. But this propels them into circumstances that they've been trying to avoid all their lives, and now the matter of survival is greater than it ever was before.

*What's Left of Me* swallowed me whole right from the start. Zhang brings to us an original and intriguing concept, and with an excellent idea came excellent execution. The idea of two souls in one body is a frightening one. In the first instance, I can't even begin to imagine what it would be like to have another soul inside of me. My own head is chaotic enough without someone else adding their own contributions, and I know I wouldn't be able to stand anyone's voice in my head for any amount of time, let alone my whole life. Even more than that, imagine having no control? As a recessive soul, there'd be no way for you have your voice heard, for you to move where you want, do what you want. I think that kind of life would honestly drive me insane. And for the disappearance of this soul, the effective death, to be an accepted thing? Truly horrible. Zhang managed to underline perfectly everything that comes along with this concept of two souls, exploring it to its full potential. Her writing is beautiful and captured everything, from emotions, to voices, to personalities.

The relationship between Addie and Eva is a fabulous example of this. Eva's frustration, and her desire to be acknowledged, accepted, loved, came across so clearly. There were times I disliked Addie for her selfishness, willing her to at least understand that Eva had a right to life just as much of her. But at the same time, it was obvious that she did understand. Despite their occasional disagreements, it's clear that they love each other and that neither can really do without the other. Both have their own distinctive voice, and I was very admiring of the fact that the author never confused her pronouns, separating Addie's actions and experiences from Eva's. I imagine it must have been hard to try and keep up with it, yet there were no mistakes. In fact, every secondary character was fleshed out; every soul met has their own personality. Even the romance worked. There was little of it, but what there was was laced expertly in the plot and proved to be very enjoyable.

The plot itself was brilliant. It started off slow and then gradually picked up, but the pacing was always exactly right. But I can't begin to tell you how emotional I became reading this. The revelations, twists and turns that made up the plot left me feeling angry, horrorstruck, full of sorrow. I couldn't believe the lies that people were believing. The ordeal that hybrids were put through. The fact that they were on their own. I sort of liked Eva and Addie's parents, I felt sorry for them, but there came a point where I was so disappointed in them, even though I had seen it coming. Eva and Addie in comparison had so much strength. Kat Zhang has truly created something amazing and heart-wrenching here, for me at least.

*What's Left of Me* has proven itself to be a tremendous story of hope, pain, courage. It's a story that has more than lived up to its potential, and I for one can't wait to see what happens next in this journey with Addie and Eva.

*This review is also posted on my blog.*

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**Blythe says**

In the world of *What's Left of Me*, children are born with two souls. One of those souls is dominant, and the other is recessive. Within a few years of the child's life, the recessive soul will fade away (settle) leaving behind the dominant soul. But what happens when you don't settle, and are known as a Hybrid? Addie and Eva are faced with that problem, being fifteen and having not settled yet. In a world where being a Hybrid is considered dangerous and a threat, Addie and Eva have to keep the fact that they have not yet settled a secret. But, as obstacles get in their way, can they?

*What's Left of Me* was amazing, and I absolutely loved it, but still, I'm torn on whether to give it five stars, or four stars. I want to give it five stars because the pace was crisp; the plot is brilliant and original beyond belief, and the concept that the story is told from the recessive soul, Eva, was a great twist on the common narrator. Everything was refreshing, fun, and there was never a dull or boring moment when reading *What's Left of Me*, but it just missed... *something*.

In *What's Left of Me*, we're told right off the bat that Hybrids are dangerous, and if you have suspicions that someone might be a Hybrid, report them immediately, for they are a threat to everyone. But, we're never actually given a reason as to why Hybrids are so dangerous, and whenever the book said how dangerous Hybrids were, I just thought, "*Why?*" I suppose maybe they aren't dangerous and it's all a prejudice thing, and that's why there never was an explanation? Again, I'm not too sure, but I hope everything is cleared up in book two. As well as that little world-building flaw, there was a flaw in the writing for me that, while little at first, grew to be an annoyance the more I read the book.

Zhang's prose is beautiful, and, like the plot, the writing is crisp and it makes for fast reading (although it took me a staggering eight days to finish this), but, unfortunately, Zhang uses an overwhelming amount of repetition when writing. At first, this was something I was able to look over easily, but, like I said, as I read more and more, and the use of repetition became more and more frequent, I became annoyed, but not overly so that I was unable to enjoy the book. And lastly in the things that make me conflicted on whether I should be giving *What's Left of Me* four or five stars was that the ending felt too anticlimactic given all the buildup for it throughout the novel, and it was a bit too neat for my likings.

Now onto less ranty things about *What's Left of Me's* rare flaws, and much more praising on everything else that's in *What's Left of Me*, because everything else was amazing.

Right from the start (actually, right when I finished the prologue), I knew that I was going to cry at least once when reading this book (I cried three times). Eva's voice and experiences (or lack of) were heartbreaking, as was reading about her longing to talk, to move her fingers even—all of the things we normally take for granted—but she was physically unable to do. And, although for most of the book she couldn't even move her fingers, she was still stronger than half of the heroines in YA literature, and that's saying something.

Another thing to absolutely love about *What's Left of Me* is that all of the characters are flawed and believable, as are all of their relationships, especially the sisterly relationship between Eva and Addie, which was portrayed expertly. And, while there is some romance in *What's Left of Me*, it takes up a very minor part in the actual story, and you might even forget there *was* a romance to begin with (like me).

Overall, despite the problems I had when reading *What's Left of Me* (and, when next to the things I *didn't* have a problem with, they seem very minor) I absolutely loved this book, and recommend it to anyone looking for an original and refreshing new YA novel.

\*After I finished writing this review, I've decided that I'm giving *What's Left of Me* 4.5 stars.\*

## Alz says

A lukewarm attempt at alternate universe fantasy vaguely dressed up as scifi, and increasingly disappointing as our heroine(s) blunder through a not particularly scary and very generic Secret Medical Government Institution toward an uninspired and predictable end.

Imagine every D-grade movie you've ever seen about someone different being singled out by the government and taken away to a shady institution for "correction". Said person somehow manages to do enough sleuthing to uncover the Terrible Truth of the place and must escape along with all the other inmates/patients with the help of the Resistance outside. Imagine every Evil Medical Institution Clichee you can, from Nurse Ratched to the single doctor left with a conscience, from the innocent little girl patient who inspires feelings of fondness and protection, to failed "experiments" and vague pseudo-science and magical drugs.

That is this book. Only 10x more boring.

I think this was trying to be a character-driven book, which was why it was kind of interesting for the first 80 pages or so--the concept of two sister souls struggling for dominance and one receding into the background, a passive passenger fearing constant threat of exposure and condemnation, is interesting. But it all goes downhill from there since neither Eva nor Addie have distinct enough personalities to remain interesting--they sounded like the same person, only we only hear Eva's POV since it's told from her first-person perspective; Addie's thoughts and actions aren't any different except oh noes, she doesn't like the boy that Eva likes or oh noes, Addie (understandably) doesn't want to risk discovery of their being a hybrid.

Ultimately, I didn't really care about Eva OR Addie. Their emotional dichotomy in the beginning was interesting but like everything else it turned lukewarm and soggy, and by the end of the book it was cold and flat. Also, the end of the book offered a very neat pat brief explanation/suggestion for how they might be able to more peacefully co-exist. Ugh.

Not to mention their incredible stupidity--if they KNOW that they have to watch themselves and have been pretending to be "settled" (only one soul) for some years now, and kept it secret to themselves for that long, you'd think they'd be OUT of the freaking habit of referring to themselves as "we" and "us". But nope. They do. And it gives them away more than once.

It's a good thing the institution they end up at is so technologically inefficient and behind the times, too, since despite the fact that they have all these dangerous kids squirreled away there and are performing questionable experiments upon them, they have crap security and apparently no cameras or microphones ANYWHERE in the vicinity, except for one kid's plot device room--and this is the one kid they probably have to worry about least. Time and again Eva/Addie sneaks out of her room at night to sit around with her love interest and talk about how they're going to escape and how they're not really settled, while they incidentally manage to carry around secret little light-up discs that glow brighter when they're near each other because it's a cute plot device so they can find each other--with no inconveniences or difficulties considering there might be, you know, WALLS in the way in the normal course of things, or maybe he's the floor above you or down below. Nope. They always find each other with their magic glowing discs that the lax security never notices.

It's things like this that continued to ruin the book--impractical, implausible, nonsensical things.

The worldbuilding is shaky at best and inexplicable at worst--apparently this is an alternate version of our own world, one where hybrids/dual-souled people have always existed. Although why they're called hybrids when they aren't really hybrids is a mystery, as is the legacy of this so-called revolution/war that put hybrids out of commission and made them the scapegoat evil for non-hybrids to rise up and conquer. The dystopic elements and length of time (although it doesn't seem THAT long ago) make some allowance for propaganda and rewriting history to mess with the information we receive--take nothing at face value, anyway--but it's frustrating because it comes off as token background developed after the fact, as if the story of two-souled people was a cool premise and then backstory was backward-engineered to try to make it more plausible.

Even the Mystery of What's Happening at the Institution is boring--not only is it predictable, Eva/Addie finds out what it is almost as soon as she/they arrive. There's a second Big Reveal later on, but it's also both predictable and implausible, as well as based on more ill-explained magical pseudo-science. There's no tension, no driving thrust of the story, and ultimately everything is so predictable that even the plot twists and action are like reading a map of clichés.

I would not read the sequel. This book was a waste of time.

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## **Thalia says**

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